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CHARACTER

OF AN K

Ill-Court-Favourite :

REPRESENTING THE

MISCHIEFS

That flow from

Ministers of State

When they are

More GREAT than GOOD,

The Arts they use to Seduce their Masters, And the Un-
happiness of Princes, that are Curs'd with such Destru-
ctive Servants.

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THE
CHARACTER
OF AN

Ill Court-Favourite:

Representing the *Mischiefs* that flow from
Ministers of State, when they are more
G R E E T than G O O D, &c.

HE that stands by and observes the *supple* Addresses and sedulous Applications of *Courtiers*, how greedily Men, reputed *Wise*, sell their Liberties, and sacrifice their Time; with what *Patience* they undergo *Attendance* more grievous than the Toil of *Algier Galley-Slaves* or *Popish Pilgrimages*, will be ready to imagine, that it must needs be some *wondrous Mystery* which deserves such Superstition; nor can expect less than the *Philosophers-Stone*, where he sees so many *Furnaces* set on work, and so rare *Alchymists* engag'd.

If he cast but a superficial Eye on the *lofty Flights* of the *favou-rites* of *Princes*, how in effect they manage all the *Reins* of the Common-Wealth, though their Masters sit in the *Saddle*; how they give *Laws* to the People by Recommending *Judges*, nay *Bias Religion* it self by bestowing *Ecclesiastical Dignities* and the *Fattest Benefices*, and make the bravest *Swordmen* kiss their Feet, since they can neither get, nor hold any *Command* of Honour or Profit, but through their *good Graces*.

He, I say, that *Remarques* all this, and also how their seeming *Virtues*, and perhaps but imaginary *Abilities*, are *Magnified*, and

Multiply'd, and even their Errours with Veneration *Concealed*, Extenuated or *Justified*; with what ease they trample upon their Adversaries, and prefer their *Dependants*, how can he refrain from drawing at so tempting a *Lottery*, or escape those delicious *Charms*, which would almost delude a Stoick to mistake such a Fortune for his *Summum Bonum*.

But alas, these are only *Outsides* to Amuse the Ignorant, these stately *Scutcheons* serve but to hide a *dead Corpse*, and these excellent Oudours to perfume a *Sepulchre*; The Factions wherewith every Court and State is perpetually pregnant, the *Envy* and *Emulation*, which, though not so loud, is yet perhaps *fiercer* than open *War*; the Spies which (like Eunuchs in *Turky*) are there set upon all Mens Actions, and the *Slippery Paths* on which they walk; the *Keen* and *Pestilent* Slanders against which Innocency it self is scarce *Armour of Proof*. These and a thousand other Inconveniencies are not presently discovered; And indeed, 'tis perhaps fit they should be *Concealed*, lest otherwise Men of Sence and Integrity *avoid Courts*, as Persons in Debt do *Prisons*, and dread Greatness like *Infection*.

Which would yet be more Apprehended, if they could have either the *Prudence*, or *leisure* to Reflect, How many Persons that in a private Station were *Honest*, *Just* and *Resolute Patriots*, when once preferred to the Misfortune of being *Great*, have Abandoned all thoughts of the *Publique* weal: their Integrity Retired to give place to their *Fortune*; too Rank *Preferment* stifled their *Honesty*, and thenceforward they aim'd only to Advance their own *narrow Interest*, and blow short-liv'd *Sparks* to warm their *private Fingers* out of the *Publique Ashes* of their Ruined Country.

Their *Innocency* lasts scarce so long at Court, as the first Man's did in the *Terrestrial Paradise*: Though they were not *wicked* before, yet they believe they ought to become *So*, and therefore as the foolish *Wise-man* of old flung all his *Goods into the Sea*, that he might more freely *Philosophize*: They resolve to rid themselves of their *Consciences*, that with less *Encumbrance* they may Manage the Affairs of State. They Conceit *Pride* necessary to support their *Dignity*, and that should they not swell and look *Big*, their Condition would be nothing *Chang'd*, that Civility would Reduce them to that *Equality*, whence they had forc'd themselves with so much trouble; to avoid *Contempt*, not being able to render themselves *Respected*, they study to make them-

themselves *feared*. They esteem, that there is no way left to blot out the Memory of their former Quality, but by the present Objects of their Tyranny, and that they shall not hinder the People from *Laughing* at their Infirmities, but by employing them to *weep* for their own *Miseries*, and complain of their Cruelties.

One would think it *Bedlam-Folly*, that Men not unacquainted with *History*, and sufficiently warned by *Experiences* of their own times, should adventure on the very *same Precipices*, on which, all that went before them *broke their Necks*; but we must remember, that *Ambition* is as *Blind* as *Love*: They (like the famous *fond Philosopher*) are gazing at *Stars* till they tumble into the *Ditch*: Their Eyes are always fixt on the *Glittering Vanities* above, suggested by a deluded Imagination, so they never look down on the *Wrecks* and *shatter'd Fortunes*, and *dismembred Bodies* and *forseited Heads*, and *Infamous Memories* of their Predecessors. For few have the Wisdom to foresee, how hard it is in Greatness to pursue *Honest* and *Safe Maxims*, what Resolution is required for the Potent to be *Innocent*, what *for-did Interests* they are forc'd to *Espouse*, and by what *Insensible Degrees* they are brought at last to swallow those *Actions* and *Compliances* without Reluctancy, which at first they look'd upon with *Detestation*; what long since was observed of *Sejanus*, holds true of many latter *Tympanies of Grandeur*, that their *favour* is not to be purchased without some notable *Crime*; you must part with your *Honour*, nay your *Soul*, if you expect promotion from such Spirits: If this were sufficiently weigh'd, we may justly presume, such as have a strict Regard to *Honesty*, would not precipitate themselves into *Publick Affairs*, and stand gaping like *greedy Camelions* to be puffed up with the tainted Air of *Haughty and Luxurious Courts*, where Interest can scarcely be preserved (unless by Miracle) without a Shipwreck of *Conscience*.

But (to make our approaches a little nearer) If it be so *ticklish* a thing for even a *good Man* to abide long in Honour, without becoming like *the Beast that perisheth*, and acting Dishonourable things, What then shall we say of those *Portentous Meteors*, that some times *Blaze* in that superiour Orbe, noxious *Exhalations* drawn up by the wanton *Beams* of Favour, from the *slime and filth* of the World, and which presage more *Calamities*, than a *Comet*, to those Nations in

which they appear? *Insolent Giants!* that Combate with displayed Colours, the Authority of the *Fundamental Laws*, and all Methods of *Justice*, who in the Government of a State produce a Design formed for *its Ruin*, who grow *Fat and Burly* from the juice and substance of exhausted Provinces, who build their own Houses with the *Wreck* and dissipation of a whole Kingdom. Princes and *Great Men* would be happy, if without *dying by Proxy*, they could *live in Person*; They are born oft times with excellent Qualities, and are *Calm Seas*, filled with Riches and Power, that might do good to all the World, if the *Winds* would but let them flow gently according to their own Nature. But as Extraordinary *Beauties* are courted by variety of Lovers, so such *exalted Conditions* rarely want a swarm of *Flatterers*, meer *Insects* bred out of putrifaction by the warmth of *Royal Sunshine*, that under the umbrage of *Adorers*, make themselves *Masters*, and, by a colour of Service, exercise an *Empire* even over those that think they Command the *Universe*; whole *sacred Names* in such a Case become but a *Pass-Port* to Mischiefs; their *Authority* a Sanctuary to *Crimes*; their *Revenues* but *Tinder* to Debauchery and Supplies for *Riot*; their Power an Instrument of *Revenge*, and a Scourge and Plague to those very People whom it ought to cherish and protect.

What shall we say of these *Insufferable Grandees*, who reck their *Private Spleens*, with the *Hands and Arms* of their Master? Who declare all those guilty of *High Treason*, who do not fall prostrate before them? who by *Fatal Wars* and dishonourable *Treaties* of Peace, by abandoning the *true Interest* of their Country, and playing the *Mountebanks* with the *Body Politick*, till they cast it at once into a *Fever* and a *Consumption*, endeavour all they can to bring the People into *Despair*, and would gladly Reduce the honestest sort of Men to so miserable a Condition, as to be unable to save themselves, but in a *Revolt*; that so they may palliate their *own Villanies* by others *forc'd Disobedience*, and trip off with the Spoils of a Nation in a *General Combustion* of their own Kindling?

Observe them in *Ancient History* (for meddle not with our Times) they first Ruin the People, and then, if not themselves, their Masters, and many times bring Destruction on all Three. Their Courses are all Violent and Domineering, they own no Laws but Will.

Will and Pleasure, their pace is always *Full-speed*, they whip and flash like Masters of a *Bride-well*, rather than Persons intrusted with the Governance of Free-men. All to them is Plunder, all is *Prey*: They cannot feed but on *dead Bodies*, they first *Rifle the Ship* they Sail in, and then wilfully *strand Her*, to conceal their own *Roberies*: Though they came only out of the *Dirt*, and to speak truly, are of *Kin* to no Body, yet they believe themselves the Heirs of all the World; there is no *Officer* of the Crown, no *Governor* of a Place, whose Succession they do not pretend unto; they think they are not in safety, so long as there is any Man in Credit or Authority, that is not a *Creature* of their own Raising.

Such People commonly introduce themselves by *Low means*, and for the most part, such as are *dishonest and Vile*; they not seldom owe the Commencement of their Fortune to a *well-danc'd Saraband*, to Agility of Body, to the *Beauty* of their Face, or the interest of a *Strumpet*: They make themselves valued by *shameful secret Services*, whose Payment is not publickly to be demanded. In a word, through wise Antiquity allowed no Entrance into the Temple of *Honour*, but through that of *Virtue*, yet these croud themselves into *Credit* by the Recommendation of *Vice*, their Crimes which truly deserve the *Halter* and the *Axe*, are the *sole Rondels*, whereby they mount the Ladder of *Towering preferment*.

Nor is their *progress* unsuitable to their *Rise*; their Design being only to make complaisant Propositions, they enquire not whether they *profit* or incommode; if they do but *please* 'tis enough. They insinuate themselves into their Masters Favour, by the Intelligence they endeavour to keep with his *Passions*. And having once possess themselves of his mind, they seize on all the *Avenues*, and leave not so much as an entrance for his *Great* or *Privy Council*, nay, scarce for his *Confessor*: How weak and tender soever his inclinations may be to *Evil*, they water and cultivate them with so much Art and Diligence, that presently there springs up a *great Tree* from a little *Seed*, and a violent and Opinionated *Habit*, from a light Disposition.

These are the *Petroniusses* and the *Tigillinusses* about *Nero*; These are the *Advocates of Voluptuousness*, the Pest of a Realm, and the *Evil Genji* of Kings.

'Tis incredible to think how many *Charms* they use, without Imploying those of Magick (of which yet the People forbear not to Accuse them.) How Ingenious are they to invent new Pleasures to a Sated and disgusted Soul, and with what *pungent sharpnesses* do they awaken the *sleeping Lusts*, which Languish and can no more?

Yet do they not at the first onset become *absolute Conquerours*, but for a time dispute with Virtue, which shall gain the Ascendent in the Court of a Prince of *Eighteen*; sometimes she gets the better, sometimes is *Repuls'd*, so that for a short Season there is a divided or Alternate *Empire* over his Affections; a kind of Twilight between Good and Ill, just Government and *Tiranny party per pale*. Projects brave and good, are *resolved upon*, but before they can come to *Execution*, the Humour is alter'd; good Councils are *given*, but e're they take *Impression* on his Mind, a *Debauch* is contriv'd, which dashes them out of his *Memory*, and they are thought of no more. Honest *Burrkus* is *hearkend* to perhaps, but these *Court Earwigs* will take care he never shall be *believ'd*.

However thus far, they are like *Seneca's Ballance*, and things are not yet grown desperate, but at last, they carry away *all before them*: The *Epicure* destroys as much in three Days, as the *Stoick* built in five Years: Having undermined or stormed the *Fortress*, they by peice-meals dismantle it, and undo the whole Frame: They assault their *Masters* good parts one after another, from petty *Sallies* of Humour and *Socible Revels*, and a *refreshing Glass* and *blushing Gallantries*, they lead him on *step by step* to the utmost degrees of *Debauchery*, *Adulteries*, *Perjury*, *Cruelty*, and *Tyranny*.

At first they content themselves to breath in his Ears, that it is not necessary for a *Prince* to be so *precisely Religious*, so *strictly Just*, so *nice-ly Temperate*, or so very *much an honest Man*. That it's sufficient, if he is *not Wicked*, that *Wine* and *Women* were design'd to sweeten the toils of Empire, and the *Fair* created on purpose for the diversion of the *Great*. That he would put himself to too much trouble to make himself beloved, that he only ought to prevent his being *Hated*: Or if that cannot be, to render himself *Feared* will do as well. That solid and perpetual Probity is too heavy and too difficult, since its *Umbrage* and *Counterfeit*, hath no less splendor than the Original,

Original, and produceth the *same Effects*; that a vertuous action or two, *kind and popular*, (which is no great matter of cost) being *filly* performed, may serve to entertain his Reputation; nor will they leave him in so *fair a way*; After having made him esteem Good as an *Indifferent* thing, they make him approve *Ill* as reasonable, and afford *Vice* the colour of *Virtue*, and represent those things which are the *shame* of all the rest of Mankind, as peculiar *Ornaments of Majesty*.

To authorize his *worst Actions*, great Examples shall not be wanting; they tell him, it is not in *Turkey* and amongst *Barbarians* that he is to look for *Precedents*, that all things are *lawful to the Powerful*, or at least any thing may be made appear to be so to the *Simple*. God's own People, the *Holy Nation* (say they) Sir, will furnish you with Instances more than enough. The very King that built the *Temple*, was also the Founder of a *Seraglio*, and we at this day see at *Constantinople* but a Copy of what was formerly to be seen at *Jerusalem*; you content your self, even in the heat of full Veins and vigour of Youth, with half a Score, or Forty or Fifty Women only, whereas he that was the *wisest Prince* the Earth could boast of, even the superlative *Solomon*, in in his old Age had *six hundred*, which the holy Scripture implies to be *Legitimate Wives*, without reckoning those which were his Concubines; And have you not heard of the *Last Will* of his Father *David*, and of those *Gallant* things he commanded by his Testament? We shall not Exaggerate them, only beseech you to consider, by how *many Deaths* he counselled his Son to secure his *own Life*.

Nay, Sir, since the Law of Grace, and amongst *Christian Princes*, you cannot find more *Sweetness*; you are nice perhaps to abandon a *Child*, or stagger to expose a *Son* that never disoblighd you. But (to omit the practise of Mahumetans, and the modern Example of the most Catholick King in the unfortunate *Don Carlos*) The great *Constantine*, that *most Holy, most Religious, and most Divine* Emperour (as he hath been called by the mouth of *Councils*) did much more than this, For he caused his *own Son* to be put to death upon the *first Suspition*, which was *falsly suggested* to him. 'Tis true, he regreted his Execution and acknowledged his *Innocency*, but this acknowledgment came too late and his Regret lasted but *four and twenty hours*; He thought himself quit by causing a *Statue* to be erected in memory

of the *Deceased*, with this Inscription, **To my Son Chrispus, whom I caused to die Unjustly.**

Do you reserve your *absolute* Authority ? Will you always stand upon *Justice* and *Title*, and vain Punctilio's of *Equity* ? Dare you not use *Force*, when the good of your Affairs requires it ? The Example of the Mighty *Charlemaign*, who is one of the *Saints* of the Church, as well as one of the *Nine Worthies*, may secure you against all the *Scruples* your Conscience can make, he knew neither a *better*, nor *greater* Right than that of *Arms*, the *Pommel* of his Sword served him for his *Seal* and *Signet*. To this day there are Privileges found granted, and Donations of Lands made, by that Good and *Orthodox* Emperour, *Roland* and *Oliver* being present, sealed with the *Pommel*, and which he swore he would warrant with the *Edge* of the same *Sword*.

Would you rule Absolutely ? At your pleasure leavy *Taxes*, and dispose of both the *Goods* and *Lives* of your Subjects ? you shall therein do nothing *New* or *Extraordinary*. All the Mighty *Monarchs* of the *East* have done it these many hundred Years. And the *most Christian King* practises it at this day. Discover not so much Weakness as to regard the *Sighs* and *Groans* of your People, who are but animated Durt, prating Beasts, Creatures design'd to be *Slaves*, as well by *Nature* as *Fortune* ; What else were they *Born* for, what else are they good for, but to be *Instruments* of your *Pleasures*, and *Sacrifices* to your *Glory* ? The only way to preserve your Authority, is to Curb the *Vermine* and keep them Miserable ; do they *Wince* under your *Rods*, then scourge them with *Scorpions*. Are they not your *Vassals* ? Why then do they *Complain* ? Shall *Slaves* be allowed to *Murmur* and *Capitulate* ? If their *Tears* grow troublesome, wash them away with their *Blood*.

There have been *Favourites* mentioned in Histories that have Instructed Princes, in these and the like *Pernicious Lessons*, and being at last tired out with defending Crimes, with *Precedents*, To excuse some new *Unparallel'd* Extravagance, they freely have told their Prince, that when there was *no Example* to be found, he might make one. That what had formerly been *Unheard of*, would, being done, cease to be so : That it would be *shameful* for the *Soueraign Authority* to give an Account of any thing it Commands, and Misbecome him, who hath *Armies* and *Fleets* to maintain his Actions, to seek *Words* or *Pretences* either to disguise or Justify them. There

There is not a Man (this is the Language of the *Sejanusses* and the *Plantusses*) Innocent in all the parts of his Life, and who in his Soul *Envies* not his Superiors, and whom they Envy, they Hate. Therefore the Prince cannot but Condemn the *Guilty*, nor strike *any* but his *Enemies*; consequently he gratifies him, whom he bereaves only of his *Goods*, in that he takes not away his Honour and leaves him his Life. *Honesty* and *Justice* are Virtues proper for *Merchants* and *Lawyers*, not for Sovereigns; That to be Slaves to their Words, is to Depose themselves, and abandon their Prerogatives, that even in Heaven (if there be any such place above a Ladies Lap) the *Oaths* of Princes are put in the same Scales with those of Lovers. That *Jupiter* Commands them to be thrown into the *Wind*, as things of no Obligation, and never to be regarded farther than present Interest requires.

Thus in a way of *fooling* and telling of *Fables*, they perswade the Prince, that he is not obliged by his Promises, nor ought to hearken to the *Fancies* of Preachers, or *Dotages* of Legislators, but stands Exempted by his *Quality* from all Laws *Divine* and *Humane*, nor is obliged by Tyes of Justice or Prudence: And that it belongs to him *Jure Divino*, to define unto Men what is *Good* or *Ill*, to declare unto the World, what for the future he will *have* to be *just* or *unjust*, as well in *Morality*, as *Policy*.

Thus are *Tyrants* made, from this Stock *Monsters* are engendred, from such Commencements we are to set *Rome* on fire, to *Butcher* the *Senate*, to dishonour *Nature* with Debauches, and declare War against it by *Parricides*. These weedling Whisperers are the first *Causes* of so many *Miseries*, and did not these Winds blow, we should be sensible of none of these *Tempests* and *Hurricanes*, able to discompose the Harmony of the best *settled Governments* in the World.

Wherefore, since in the whole bulk of sublunary Beings, there is no *Good* of so great use, and which so universally Communicates it self as a *Good Prince*, nor any *Ill* which disperseth it self farther, or is more pernicious than a *Bad One*: Can there be any Punishments great enough in all the extent of *Humane Justice*, for those who *Change* this *Good* into *Ill*; Who corrupt so *Salutiferous* and so excellent a thing? They had far better have poison'd all the *Wells* and all the *Fountains* in their Countries; nay should they infect the *Rivers* themselves, Water might be gotten from elsewhere, even Heaven would
still

still furnish us with some *refreshing Drops* : But here of necessity we must either *Choak*, or drink *Poison* ; against these Domestick Ills, we are not permitted to use *Forein Remedies* ; We are obliged to continue *Miserable* by the Laws of our *Religion*, and to obey *Furies* and *Madmen*, not only out of *Fear*, but also for *Conscience* sake.

For which cause, since the Persons of Princes, *whatsoever they be*, ought to be Inviolable and *Sacred*, and that the *Characters* of God's Finger makes an Impression, which we are to Reverence, on what *matter* soever it be Engraven, no wonder if *Subjects* turn all their Hatred against these *Flatterers*, which cast them into these Miseries without Redemption : If they pursue with all manner of *Execrations* these evil Councillors which give them *ill Princes*, which provoke Innocents to *Murder*, and good Natures to Barbarous Cruelties ; 'Tis their pernicious Advice which occasions all fatal Resolutions. Their Maxims of *Fire and Blood* assure and fortify Malice, when it is as yet timorous and doubtful, they *sharpen* what cuts, they precipitate what is falling, they encourage the *Violent* to run after the Prey, they inflame the desires of the Avaritious to Invade their Peoples *Goods*, and those of the Lascivious to *Debauch* their Daughters and *Ravish* their Wives.

But if they meet with Natures which are not susceptible of those *strong Passions*, and which by their Complexions are in an equal degree distant from Vice and Virtue, if they light on those *soft Princes* who are without Sting or Spirit, and have small Inclinations to great and mighty Evils, but rather propense to *Ease* and *Effeminate Delights*, such as divide Time between the *Cup and the Bed*, and are more intent at the *Theatre* than the Council Chamber. 'Tis still so much the *Worse* for those People who live under them, for abusing the Simplicity of their *pliant Master*, and taking the Advantage which their Spirit hath over his, they themselves *Reign* openly, and their Just Dominion adds to the weight of Tyranny, the *Shame* that occurs from suffering it from a particular private Person and *fellow Subject*.

You cannot imagin the *Wiles* and *Artifices* they use to attain hereunto, and totally to subject to themselves the Prince. Their method is to spur him with Glory in the Establishment of their Fortune. They give him to understand, through several *Trunks*, that his Predecessors, who

who were nothing more powerful than He, made some far *greater Creatures* of their own, that 'tis more safe to raise up *New People*, who have no Dependance, and who shall only hold from his Majesty, than to use Persons of *Ancient Birth*, and of known Probity, whose Affections and Party may be already made; that it concerns his *Honour* not to leave his Works *Imperfect*, but to labour for their Embellishment, after he has *Established* their *Solidity*. That he ought to put them in a Condition, that they may not be ruin'd, but by themselves. That if he yields to the desires of his *Ancient Nobility*, who will indure no Companions; or if he consents to the Complaints and *Petitions* of his *People*, who are ever Enemies to all *Growing Greatness*, he will not for the future have the Power to reward a *Servant*, or to gratify those that oblige him. But must live a *Præarious King*, a meer *Duke of Venice*, a *shadow of Royalty*, and be forc'd to call an Assembly of the *States*, to dispose of the least Office in the Kingdom; besides, they represent, that he cannot abandon a Person who hath been so dear unto him, without condemning the Conduct of *many Years*, and rendring a publick Testimony either of *past Blindness*, or present fickleness. Nor wants this Argument its force, for 'tis certain, that having begun to love any object for the *Love of it self*, time presently adds our own Interest to the merit of the thing, the desire that we have that all the World should believe, that our Election was good, makes the Action of Necessity, which before was *Voluntary*, so that what hath been done against Reason, being not to be justified, but by an *headstrong Perseverance*, we never think that we have done enough, and upon this fond conceit, though never so much *Reason* be offered to discontinue our Affection, yet it seems, we are obliged in point of Honour, to defend our *Judgment*.

Now, if these *Temptations* can shake stable Minds, and sometimes make *Wise Men* fail, we need not be Astonish'd, if they easily overthrow *weak Princes*, who make use only of *borrowed Reason*, and who will yield themselves to be perswaded by a very mean Eloquence, so it but suits with their already biassed Inclination.

And when once a Prince is engaged in the making of this Subject (whom as much without Merit, as beyond Measure he dotes upon) *Great*, He speaks of him no more, but as his Enterprize, and

the utmost Effort of his *Prerogative* and creative Power, and so goes on in a blind Zeal, till without minding it, he even Adores what he hath made, like the Statuaries of *Athens*, who from their own handy-work chose their *Gods*; His thoughts which shou'd be imployed for *Glory*, and the publick good of his Realm, and have no other Object, but the *safety* and *welfare* of his People, are all at an end in this pitiful Design, in blowing up a *gandy bubble* of Honour, as *vain and trivial*, and yet no less *Gay*, than that which Children raise with a *Quil* from *water and Soap*; He opens to him all his *Coffers*, and pours out Treasures on him as much in despite of others, as to benefit him; and at last when he hath conferred on him all the *Offices* of the Kingdom, and all the Ornaments of his Crown, and has nothing left to give him but his own *Person*, he surrenders that too with so absolute and so total a Resignation, that in the very *Monasteries*, there is not an Examp'e of a Will more *Subjected* and more perfectly renouncing it self.

Hence forwards he appears *at Council*, but when his Presence is necessary to authorize some extravagant preresolv'd Design, in the Debate of which he never bore a part, and is content to shew himself for no other purpose, but to justify what those that advised him to it, are both *afraid* and *ashamed* to own; he is amused with petty Divertisements unworthy of his *Condition* and of his *Age*; they take from about him all that dare speak *Truth*, they ruin under several Pretences all that's *Eminent* and *Virtuous* in the State, and he imagins because they tell him so, that all this is absolutely *necessary* for his *Service*, and the Support of his Government; thus *Seneca* must be *Butcher'd* before *Nero* could turn perfect Monster, and *Boetius* banish'd by *Theodoricus*, at the Perswasion of his three fatal Favourite, because that good and Wise Statesmen was an Obstacle to their lewd Designs.

To ruin honest *Patriots* that would stop the unhappy Torrent, Slanders are raised, and *Calumnies* advanc'd, and false Informations encouraged, they are seized on general Rumours without specifying their Crime, and condemned unheard, as Enemies to *Religion* and the *State*: Those that are Rich and Peaceable are entrapp'd by *In-formers* and penal Edicts let loose upon them: Those whose *past Services* and undoubted *Loyalty* maintain them in Repute, and whose
fidelity

fidelity is without Reproach, are employed in Chargeable, or put upon hazardous Attempts and ungrateful Offices, either that they may lose their *Reputation* or *themselves*. Some are driven away by an absolute Command to retire, others honourably *Banish'd* by an Embassy, and in the room of all these, the ambitious *domineering Cabal* place Persons at their own Devotion, who never look farther than their Benefactors, and stop at the next Cause of their Fortune, and therefore study to serve and advance their Interests, who raised them, not the Prince's, though still they call themselves his Servants, and wou'd be thought the greatest *Zealots* for his Honour.

Thus may an *unfortunate Prince* come to be at the Mercy and Discretion of his *Favourite*, he shall not cast a look, but presently a Spy renders the other an Account, nor utter one Word, but what is told him again, so that in the midst of his own Court, and amongst all his *Guards*, he shall be Invironed with none but *Savages*, that prey upon him, not having one *faithful Tongue* about him, that dare truly represent his Peoples Sufferings, nor one *honest Ear* to whom he may tell his own: Besides he quickly becomes so far engag'd, that there is no way for him to release himself, the other making all the World his *Real Enemies*, or suspected for such, that he may have none but him to trust: And by having long had the possession of Affairs, which he communicates with none, he alone understanding all, and knowing the *State*, he at last becomes a *necessary Evil*, which neither can the Prince be cured of, but by a dangerous Remedy.

After this manner, in an absolute *Peace*, being at Amity with his Neighbours, no Foreign Enemy appearing on the *Frontiers*, without striking a Stroke, or having ventured farther than from the *Palace* to the *Theatre*, may a Prince insensibly fall into *another Man's Power*, which after the defeat of an Army, is the worst thing that could happen; and to speak home, the Battel of *Pavia* was not so fatal to *Francis* the First, nor the taking of *Rome* to Pope *Clement* the Seventh, for if their *Disgrace* was great, it was not *Voluntary*, if they lost their Liberty, they in their Afflictions preserved the Glory of their *Courage*, and if they were taken *Prisoners*, 'twas by a great Emperour, who was their Enemy, and not by one of their *Petty*

Subjects ; There is no Captivity so miserable, so base, nor so Infamous, as that of a Prince who suffers himself to be *shackled* in his his Cabinet, and by one of his own, he can never Exercise a more Cowardly Patience, nor be more shamefully happy : Suppose a King should Eat his People to the very Bones, and live in his own State as in an Enemies Country, he would not so far estrange himself from the Duty of his Place, as when he obeys another ; there is 'tis true, a vast difference betwixt *Tyranny* and *Royalty*, yet the former resembles the latter a great deal more than *Servitude*. It's at least some kind of Government, and one way of Commanding Men, although a very ill one. But for a Sovereign to give up himself as a Prey to three or four *Petty Fellows*, in the Knowledge and Conduct of all his Affairs, certainly there cannot be a more miserable *Interregnum*, than such a Prince's Life, during which he doth *nothing*, and yet doth all those Evils which may happen to the People.

In this Condition he is civilly Dead, and hath as it were *Deposed* himself, it is only his Effigies, which is used in publick, which out of custom, and for a show, hath some Homages paid, and useless *Congees* made to it. But in effect Royalty is forsaken, and Favour only courted, and a civil Idolatry committed ; For as some *superstitious Bigots* say ten *Ave Maria's* to one *Pater Noster*, and call an hundred times oftner upon St. *Francis*, than on our Saviour, so in this case, where one addresses himself to the King, forty Suiters apply themselves to the Favorite ; for indeed to go to the Prince without his Meditation, would be a certain Course to *spoil your Business*, though never so just in it self, or advantagious to the Publick.

What a brave thing it was in former times, to see a King of *Castile*, who durst not walk abroad, nor put on a *new Suit*, without the permission of *Alvares de Luna* ; all Favours which others demanded of his Majesty, he himself was obliged to obtain from him. The most he could do was to recommend *their Petitions* to his Favourite, and to do good Offices with him, for those whom he loved. How preposterous would it be to see such a Courtier as he was, who revoked the Elections of his Prince, turn'd those out of their Places, to whom his *Master* had granted them, nay proceeded to that height of Insolence, that he took it very ill, that his Master should *once in his Life* offer to read a Paper, which he presented him to

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Sign, and complained that this was to *upbraid his Fidelity*, and forget his past Services.

But there are *Shee-favourites* as well as *Bearded-ones*; and tho' this be the *weaker Sex*, yet both their *Passions* and *Enchantments* are the stronger of the two. *Hercules* and *Achilles* were not the only *Hero's* that truckled to the Distaff: *Love* has often govern'd the *Politicks*, and the Fortune of a whole Kingdom become the Pastime of a *debauched Woman*; For it's too true, that such Persons have strangely derided the Authority of the Laws, and the Majesty of Empire; More than once they have trampled underfoot Crowns and Scepters; they have taken pleasure, and sported themselves with the Violation of Justice, and gloried in their cruel Pride, in Afflicting and rendring Humane Kind Miserable. 'Tis not long since there appeared one of these *Heroina's*, who was risen to so high a degree of *Insolency*, that having been solicited about a certain Affair which had been represented unto her as *just and facile* to be done, that she might the more *willingly employ* herself therein, she answered with a Fierceness worthy of her Sex and Profession, *That she used not her Credit so lavishly; that another might serve in so slight an occasion to do just and possible things, for her part, she accustomed herself only to undertake those which were Unjust and Impossible.*

How many Mischiefs do you think follow such an one, how many Violences are committed under the shadow of these fatal *overgrown Medlers*? Such a *puffed up Succuba* hath not a Groom or a Lackey, who believes it not to be his Right and Privilege to abuse at his pleasure any other Subject, and by alledging only that he belongs to such a *great Minister*, commits all Outrages with *Impunity*, affronts Justice, and dares tell to your teeth, after he has *Cheated* and abused you never so grievously, that you are obliged, and ought to thank him for his *Civility* that he did not *Murder* you.

All this while, you will say, what is this to the Prince? And yet, with all Deference be it spoken, he cannot be said to be wholly *Innocent* of the Miscarriages: His Ignorance is not *Unblamable*, his *Patience* herein is not *Virtue*, and the Disorders which either he *knows not of*, or which he *suffers*, are imputed to him before God, even as if himself had done them; and therefore that Prince who was according to God's own Heart, in express terms desires him,

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and that in the fervency of his most ardent Prayers, that he would *Cleanse him from his secret Faults, and acquit him from the Sins of others*; which last Word intimates, that Kings ought not to content themselves with a *personal Innocency*, that it is not enough for them to be Just, if they lose themselves, and destroy their People by the *Injustice* of their Ministers, which becomes their own, because they *tolerate* it, and *Countenance* it, by conniving and not punishing it with severity. *Qui non prohibet, quum potest, Jubet.*

Not to multiply Examples: Can King *Abasuerus* be justified, who in a moment abandoned to the Vengeance of a *pernicious Haman*, so many thousand innocent Lives, and those too of the *Select People of God*, without enquiring into their Crimes, or making any Reflection on what he granted: He had doubtless no bloody Design, nor any Imagination whither that inhumane Commission he so readily delivered with his *Royal Signet*, would tend, and his ordinary Idleness, or over conceit of the Justice and Prudence of his Favourite, suffer'd him not to take any farther Cognizance of it, which rendred him *doubly Culpable*, to permit so many *Murthers*, and yet be ignorant of it. For so, no less wittily than judiciously, *Seneca* brings in *Claudius* in the other World, and some Men Reproaching him with abundance of *Murthers*, done under his Name, who pleaded not Guilty, and protested he did not so much as know what they meant, nor ever heard of those Sufferers *Names* before, upon which the Ghost of *Augustus* rose up, and said, *Thou Miscreant, we talk not here of the Slaughters thou hast committed, but of those thou hast not known: For it is a more shameful thing to a King to be Ignorant of the Evil that passes in his Kingdom, than to act it. Turpius ignorasti, quam occidisti.*

Great Events are not always produced by great Causes. The Springs are hid which move these *vast Machines* of State, that externally appear, and when these *Springs* happen to be truly discovered, we are astonisht to see them so *small* and so *weak*, and half ashamed of the high opinion we had before conceived of them. A fit of *Jealousie* in an amorous Intrigue between two particular Persons, hath more than once been the cause of a general War. A little *reflective Joak* uttered in a gay Humour, an Affront to a *Page*, a *Whisper* and a *Nod*, a *Tale* told at the King's going to Bed, is in appearance nothing, and yet this nothing hath been the beginning of *Tragedies*, wherein

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a Sea of Blood hath been shed, and an hundred *Heads* made fly. 'Tis but a *Cloud* which passes, a small stain in the corner of the Air, which vanishes rather than abides, and yet 'tis this *light Vapour*, this almost imperceptible Cloud, which raiseth the most *fatal Tempests*, which shake almost the Foundations of the Earth. The People, whenever War is proclaimed, think it their Sovereign's Interest, that 'tis to Revenge some insufferable Affronts, or have *Reparation* of vast Damages sustained, that 'tis to prevent an *Invasion*, or secure their Tranquillity, to encrease *Traffick*, or force by Arms the necessary Conveniences of Peace : When in truth, perhaps all this *Baffle* and *Hazard*, this Blood and Treasure consum'd, proceeds only from the *Capricio's* of two or three *Pensionary Courtiers*, that are content to hazard the Ruin of their own *Master and Country* to advance the Designs of some *powerful Neighbour*, that underhand feeds them with *Gold* ; Or from some other unthought of *Whim*, if not altogether so base, more *Ridiculous*.

I doubt not but the mighty *Zerxes* made most specious Pretences to justify his Arms, when he made his Inroad upon *Greece*, and his *Manifesto's* told wonders of his Intentions ; he received (I'll warrant you) *Injuries*, which he was bound to *Chastise*, and had a *Right* which he was obliged to assert, so that he could not without *diminution to his Glory* refrain the Expedition ; for he forgot not to tell them, that he laboured the *Repose* of the World, and to unite *Europe* and *Asia*, that he, the mighty Monarch of the *East*, came to *Chastise* the *petty Tyrants*, and that he came purely out of compassion to the People, and offered them a rich glorious Liberty, instead of a poor and shameful Servitude. There is no doubt but he *Falsified* his Design several ways, and perhaps swore, that it was immediately Inspir'd him from the *Immortal Gods*, and that the *Sun* himself was the Author of his *March* ; Yet notwithstanding all this *Parade* and colour of *Justice* and *Religion*, the bottom of the business was in truth only this, a *Greek Physician*, the Queen's Domestick, having a mind to review the Port of *Pyraum*, and taste the *Figs of Athens*, put this fancy of War into his *Mistress's* Head, and got her to engage her Husband in the Attempt. So that the King of Kings, the *Puissant Redoubtable Zerxes*, rais'd an Army of three hundred thousand Combatants, levell'd the Mountains, drank up Rivers, and overburden'd the

the Sea, &c. only to bring back a *Mountebank* into his own Country. Surely the *Quack* might have gone the Journey with less Expence and a smaller *Equipage*.

The *Greek* History affords us another notable Example in the Kingdom of *Macedonia*. Long before the Birth of King *Philip*, there happen'd a famous Conspiracy, which of *one Saint* made two, and divided the Court, the Towns and the Families, upon the most trivial occasion imaginable; One *Meleager*, Governour of a Frontier-Town, and General of the *Cavalry*, having an handsome Wife, and withal so good *Natur'd*, as seldom suffer'd any of her Lovers to die of Despair. The King hearing of her *Beauty* and *Gallantry*, had a mind to give her a Visit in private, but finding her no such exquisite *Beauty* as Fame had represented her to his Fancy, he at first sight betray'd his *Disgust*, and presently went away in a Huff; which Affront our *stately Dame* (who had no ill opinion of her own Merit) resent'd so briskly, that from that very Hour she vow'd *Revenge*: And not being able to effect it better, than by corrupting her Husband's Fidelity, and debauching him from the Service of his Master, she employ'd all her *Charms* to that purpose; till at last, by the continual Croakings of this *Night Raven*, the poor Man had lost his Reason, and forgot his *Duty*, and by this *bosome Cockatrice* became so Impoison'd, that he quitted the Service of his King, and embark'd himself in the Party of a Tyrant, without knowing truly what Motion drove him, nor what Passion he reveng'd; He acted a Part he understood not, and was but his *Wife's Soldier*, when he thought he was the Head of the Revolt.

'Tis undoubtedly a Truth, That Kings cannot Reign without *Ministers*, and scarce less Certain, that they cannot Live without *Favourites*: The wisest Princes in the World, the *Augustusse's*, and the *Antonines*, the *Constantines*, and the *Theodosiusse's*, if they should *Revive*, would once again, as well as formerly, give Testimonies of *Humane Affection*, and might with reason love one Man (*Ceteris paribus*) rather than another; For Virtue is not so austere and savage as to destroy *Nature*, nor do the *Politicks* oblige a Prince to divest himself of Humanity; his Motions need only be *Just* and *well Regulated*: Let him shew his Bounty and his *Kindness* to particular Persons, let him enjoy his *Diversions*, his *Complacencies*, and his *Friendships*

ships too, but still it were to be wisht he would observe a *proportion* and *measure* in the distribution of his Favours. Let not *Nero* make his a Horse a *Consul*, nor every Fidler a *Minister of State*; Let not a mighty Monarch Debauch *Nobility* (the Screen of Majesty) by conferring Honours on the *Sons of Earth*, and little People as void of *Quality*, as *Merit*; Let him not encourage Villany by Preferments, the proper *Dowry* of Virtue; nor impoverish the Publick, to make one Man unmeasurably Rich. Let there be a Man (the Dictates both of Religion and Reason allow it) who is the *Prince's Confident*, and on whom he may, like the Sun, more peculiarly dart down his Beams; but let there not be any who Day and Night *besiegeth* the King, who by a violent Usurpation (the most *abhorrible Monopoly* in Nature) appropriates him to himself: For he who *Impales* a Good which ought to belong to the Publick, attempts the same *Injustice* as if he hid the *Sun* from all the World.

There is nothing that recommends a Prince's *Judgment*, or that is of more Importance to his *Safety*, than a discreet *Choice* of his Ministers. A Man cannot conduct a *Boat*, nor guide a *Gbariot*, nor manage an *Horse*, without making use of Address and Method; and shall those who are to direct Mankind, jump into the Employ without any preparatory Discipline? We come to the knowledge of Affairs, and the dexterity of ordering them, by *Experience* and *Reason*. A *Place* does not presently make a Man wiser than he was before; nor are we to expect *Revelations*, nor think Heaven obliged to endow a Prince's Ministers with the *Spirit of well Governing*, and render his precipitate Election valid and *successful* by a sudden Illumination: Courtiers are the *Matter*, and the Prince is the *Artist*, who can easily render this Matter *Fairer*, but not better than it is; he can add to it Colours and Shape on the outside, but cannot give it any interior Goodness. He can bestow the *Office* and the *Title*, but he cannot confer *Qualifications*: The knowledge of things past, the penetration into things to come: That Light which disembroils the Intrigues of the Court, the Science of making War, and the Dexterity of treating Peace. In a word, he may make an *Idol*, but he can neither make a *Spirit* of it, nor an *Able Man*.

Yet even in *Christendom* such *Idols* are to be seen; there have been always unworthy Persons happy; *Monkies* caressed in Kings Cabinets, and apparell'd in *Cloth of Gold*; There often happens an Authority
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which is *Blind and Dumb*, which neither knows nor understands, which appears only and Dazles, *pure refin'd Authority* you may call it, for it has not any *mixture of Virtue or Reason*. There are *Grandees*, who are only remarkable by their *Greatness*, and their *Greatness* is all without them; they resemble certain *fruitless Mountains* in some Parts of the World, which produce neither *Herb* nor *Plant*, they seem to touch Heaven with their stately tops, yet serve the Earth for no *Use*, and therefore their *Sterility* makes their height *accursed*.

Princes therefore should make a strict Inquiry into the Abilities and virtues of those they Employ, they should not suffer themselves to be led by *occasion*, but take for their Instruments such as are able, not such as *stand next*, or first offer themselves; wherein too, they should regard not only a general *Sufficiency*, but a particular fitness for discharging those Charges, in which they place them; they must not think an expert *Soldier*, that hath signaliz'd himself in divers Battels, is therefore qualified to be sent on an *Embassy*, nor make an old *Prodigal* Lord, Treasurer, and submit the *Exchequer* to his dispose, because having in his youth profus'd away all his own Estate, he now speaks admirably well of *Frugality*.

Nor should a Prince presently thrust into his *Council* all those whose *Conversation* is grateful to him; we ought to make a difference betwixt Persons who *delight* us, and those who are *profitable* to us; betwixt the Recreations of the Mind, and the *necessities* of the State; and if a Sovereign take not special care in this *Examen*, he will commit irremediable Errours, and such whereby he may render not only his *own Reign* miserable, but also his Memory *accursed* and reproached in Ages to come. He therefore ought not to follow his own *private Affections* or *Inclinations*, but abandon all *Capricio's* and fantasies in this matter: Let him in other things *Sport* and divert himself as he pleaseth, but in a choice of so high Concernment, he must use the *severity of his Judgment*, and at first bring with him an *indifferency of Will*: It ought to be a pure *Operation of Reason*, freed and dispoil'd of *Love* or *Hate*.

For the Mischiefs, arising from ill Ministers are no less fatal, than *Various*, part of which we have already Recounted, and to sum them up all, is almost as difficult, as to prevent them. If they are *Ignorant*, they Ruin the *State*, their *Master*, and *themselves*, by their Weakness; if they are *False* and *Treacherous*, they set the Publick to *Sale*, and betray its Interest for *Money*. If they are Men of ill
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Principles, they blow up their Prince to *Vanity* by Flatteries, and banish Truth from the Palace. They put him upon extravagant Designs, or endeavour to crown him in Voluptuousness; they exhaust the Royal *Treasury* by their profuseness, and strip poor People to the very Skin to feed their insatiable *Avarice*; they rob the Prince of his noblest and most stable *Throne*, the *Hearts of his Subjects*, by creating Fears and mutual Jealousies between them; and whilst with vain Pretences and Endeavours, no less impracticable, than *Unjust*, they would seem to make him more absolute than his Forefathers, they render him less Considerable at home, and consequently less Rever'd abroad, than any of his Ancestors, they manage Affairs according to their private Fancies, and hate *publick Councils*; having committed Extravagances that render them liable to Justice, the rest of their Life is spent not to serve their Master, but to *save their own Necks*; So that in all their following Councils they consult not his *Advantage*, but their *own Defence*, and make his Interests stoop to their Conveniences; what care they how much the People be provoked, they had rather their Country should be involv'd in all the Miseries and Desolations of a *Civil War*, or be made a Prey to a *Foreign Invader*, than they themselves brought to an Account before an *Impartial Tribunal*; since in the *first Case*, they hope to shift amongst the *Croud*, but in the *second*, can expect nothing but certain Ruin, for their *Conscious Fears* presage what will happen; they know well enough, the *ills* they have done must be defended with greater, and if the *Law* live, they must die; wherefore these being their Courses, and that the *Plague* causes not so great a Desolation, as one of these *accursed Favourites*, it might be wish'd, that this Prayer might be added to all the publick Litanies of Christians, *Lord turn away from all States an Evil, which is the cause of so many other Evils: Deny not Sovereign Princes the Spirit of Conduct, which is fit for them to Govern by: Give them understanding enough to Council themselves well, and to chuse their Counsellors as they ought.*

To conclude, as the first advances of Ill-Court-Favourites are commonly *base and shameful*, their Progress *Vile*, wicked and destructive, their short Continuances attended with *Hazards* and Anxieties, so their *Eclipses* are ever more fatal, and their Falls desperate, they are generally surprized with Ruin, and their defeat is like that of *Forlorn Troops*, cut in pieces before they can Rally, or be reinforc'd. Private

vate Men oftimes fall upon their *Legs* and find Friends to relieve, at least to *Commiserate* them, and *Bankrupt* Merchants, are daily seen to rise again like *Phoenixes* out of their own Dust, but with *Courtiers* and *Statesmen* there are no degrees of Misfortune; those *Ladders* they clamber'd up with so much Sweat, Address and Difficulty, upon the smallest miss step, serve but to render their precipitation more notorious; when they are hurl'd down from all those *bubbled Glories*, their best comfort is not to *survive* their Destiny, and their greatest Misery is, when they outlive themselves, to see their Families *Buried* in their Ruins, and all the advantages of their Honour and Fortune turn'd against them, like an Army dissipated with the fury of its own *Cannon*; Then too late, they find themselves forsaken of all those *Alliances*, which they had with so much subtilty contracted, vainly imagining to have laid a Foundation of everlasting Greatness: Their *Cobweb Policies* are unravel'd in a Moment, for no sooner do they begin to decline, but their most *obliged Creatures* shun them most, and like *Haman's Wife* are the *first Harbingers* of their Ruin. Those that *were raised* by their Countenance, not daring to *own* any Love or Honour to their Persons, lest they should be involv'd in their Ruin, by being at least suspected, as concern'd in their Crimes; their own *Servants* conclude it but *Justice*, as well as *Prudence*, to expose their Faults; Their *Enemies* triumph over them, and even their *Friends* think it Charity enough to afford them an insulting *Pity*, and the *People*, who with reason universally hated, but *feared* them *before*, are now priviledg'd to *Curse* them; nay the Prince himself, in whose Service perhaps they wounded their Consciences, and for whose Pleasures they *Bleed*, uses them but as the *Skreen of Envy*, and hoping with their Ruin to gratify *many*, and please *all*, gives them up, when he cannot in Prudence longer support them, as a *propitiatory Sacrifice* to the enraged Multitude, and becomes as inexorable to their *Petitions*, as they had been formerly to the more *just Requests* of others in distress.

In fine, having long since forfeited their *Innocency* (the sweet Retreat of oppressed Virtue) they at last find no *Sanctuary* sufficient to protect them, but are precipitated out of the World, loaded with *Guilt* and *shame*, and the *Ruins* of Nations, and the *destruction* of their *Masters*, and the *Execrations* of all Mankind.

